

386 SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER

limited to a minority of the reading public.
Besides, it is
usually possible to transmit in a translation,
at least in
essential particulars, the lesson -which, a book
is intended
to convey. But at the same time much is
lost, and in a
good many instances translations which have
even taken
rank as literature do not adequately
represent their origi-
nals. At the present day, with respect to
contemporary
works, excellence in translation is scarcely to
be obtained,
for commercial conditions militate against it.
An author
may give years to the writing of a book,
whereas the Eng-
lish translator is compelled to prepare his
version in a few
months, at times even in a few weeks, for it is
often stipu-
lated by the publisher that the translation
must appear at
the same time as the original. It may be
necessary also
for the English translator to attend to some
serial publica-
tion, and to provide for copyright in America,
with the re-
sult that the work has to be done hastily, in a
rough and
ready manner. Again, the prices paid for
translations are
usually so low that few men of real ability are
willing to
undertake them. The writer, though he has
had great ex-
perience in these matters, can suggest no
remedy, for un-
doubtedly the commercial as well as the
literary side of the
question has to be considered, and even if a
translator, re-
gardless of gain, were to bestow on his work
all the time

and care it might deserve, the chances
would be that no
publisher would look at it, for the market would
be gone —
so swiftly do even very able books perish in
these modern
days.

With respect to the writer's own work, as
translator or
as editor of various English versions of Zola's
novels, he is
fully aware of its many imperfections, due
in some in-